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LIBRARY SCIENCE
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THE ASSISTANT LIBRARIAN

FORMERLY "THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT"
OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE A.A.L.

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VOLUME 46 • • 1953 • • NUMBER 9
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THE ASSISTANT LIBRARIAN

Official Journal of the Association of Assistant Librarians
(Section of the Library Association)

Edited by A. C. Jones, Hornsey Public Library

VOL. XLVI, NO. 9

NOVEMBER, 1953

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

A PURELY formal agenda did little to stimulate interest in our equally formal 58th Annual General Meeting, which was held in the Central Library, Sheffield, on Sunday, 13th September. Only some 70 members attended, apparently more out of a sense of duty than because of any vital matters which they wished to raise on the agenda. (It is noteworthy that nearly half of that number travelled in the Manchester and District coach, the majority of them coming from Manchester Public Libraries).

The seal was thus peacefully set on the report of another year's achievement, and two Honorary Auditors were discreetly nominated and re-elected. No murmur of discontent nor burst of unseemly applause marred the solemnity of the occasion.

High jinks are clearly out of place at an Annual General Meeting; but a representative and critical gathering of members is not. It would seem that the Council and Officers enjoy the full confidence of members, and we would not wish it otherwise, but we should prefer to have more positive evidence of the fact. The inadequacy of recent Annual Meetings in this respect must be regarded by Council as a challenge to its resourcefulness if apathy and complacency are alike to be avoided. We have sometimes congratulated ourselves upon the excellence of our Annual Conference compared with that of the Library Association. We must not find ourselves in the predicament of envying the latter the lustiness of its Annual Meetings.

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

FOLLOWING the business meeting, Mr. C. W. Taylor, F.L.A., delivered his Presidential Address. He briefly reviewed the history of the Association, and deplored the fact that whereas in pre-war days the most active members were under 25, to-day they were in the late thirties. More active participation by younger members was necessary if the vitality of the Association was to be sustained.

There followed an examination of the Vollans *Report on library co-operation in Great Britain*, culminating in a plea for the substitution of regional co-operation on the Yorkshire pattern for the more usual and costly apparatus of Bureau and Union Catalogue.

"Yorkshire is the one area in the country which has no established Regional Bureau or Union Catalogue. The basic idea is that the five larger systems in the county shall lend books to their smaller brethren. This principle is in process of being expanded so that the medium-sized boroughs shall also share in the lending of books. The cost of running the Region is fantastically low when compared with other Regions. It deals with approximately the same number of applications annually as the Northern Region, for example, based on Newcastle, the relative costs being: Northern, £1,123; Yorkshire, £105. The difference is essentially

due to the staffing and maintaining of the Regional Bureau . . . Vollans cites the time taken to satisfy applications in four regions; in the Northern, 70 per cent. are satisfied in up to a fortnight; in the West Midlands, 83 per cent.; in the North Western, 85 per cent.; in Yorkshire, 93 per cent."

Mindful of the fact that custom forbade discussion of the Presidential Address, Mr. Taylor invited any interested members to correspond with him on the matter.

MANOR BRANCH LIBRARY, SHEFFIELD

BEFORE and after the Annual General Meeting members had an opportunity of examining the Central Library and the Manor Branch Library. One has seldom seen so many librarians with their mouths so wide open as on the occasion of this final visit, which did much to disperse the cobwebs which had been all too apparent during earlier proceedings. The library is described in the *L.A.R.*, June, 1953. It demands a visit by all who are interested in introducing new ideas into their own more humdrum buildings, and also—need it be said?—by those with the more prosaic object of passing examinations.

COUNCIL NOTES

WITH THE publication of the Tighe Report and every evidence of energetic action from the Library Association towards ensuring its implementation, the members of the Council must have regretted that what appears to be a much less complex problem is apparently incapable of solution. That is the question of posts advertised at inadequate salaries. With the memory of Thurrock in their minds, the September Council decided to ask its officers to prepare a full report on the problem in general, going back to basic principles, and, if possible, to suggest a new approach.

It was also agreed to forward to the Library Association a petition containing nearly three hundred names, asking that the Library Association Library at Chaucer House should be open to members in the evenings.

Mr. Parsonage, the present Vice-President, accepted the unanimous invitation of the Council to succeed to the Presidency in 1954, and the Council appointed as his successor Mr. J. S. Bristow, the retiring "Chancellor." The Assistant Honorary Treasurer (Mr. W. Hudson, F.L.A.) was nominated to succeed Mr. Bristow, and the other officers of the

Association were nominated for re-election: although both the Honorary Secretary and the Honorary Editor gave notice of their intention not to seek re-election after another year.

The Council heard from the Publications Committee that the success of the *Fiction Index* was being followed by the steady demand for Binns' *Introduction to historical bibliography*: although in view of its need, the success of this excellent book came as no surprise. It was too early to comment on the sale of Holliday, but the Honorary Publications Officer indicated that the number of repeat orders coming from libraries into which a single copy had penetrated augured well for its future.

The Council said good-bye with regret to Mr. Frank Cole, who had been forced by ill-health to resign from the post of Honorary Publications Officer, and welcomed his successor, Mr. Thomas Mann, of Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

The Education Committee's report was naturally largely concerned with the running of correspondence courses. It was pleasing to note that the number of applications to join the panel of tutors was much larger than usual. On the committee's recommendation,

the Library Association is to be asked to adopt the General Certificate principle of announcing marks in multiples of five.

Regret was expressed that although many tutors commented upon the apparent inability of some of their students to follow the prescribed course of reading, insufficient use was being made of the students' section of the L.A. Library. It is hoped that this comment will be brought to the notice of anyone you may hear bemoaning the inability to obtain X.

In the general consideration of miscellaneous topics which followed, it was decided to ask the Library Association to include in its nomination papers information about candidates

similar to that provided by the A.A.L. and NALGO; to give full publicity to the post-entry training scheme (the Council heard some alarming tales of post-entry discouragement); the possibility of making available in English more of the Scandinavian professional writings; and the general disinclination of people to attend meetings.

Leaving the consideration of standardization of methods and stationery as a main dish for November, the Council rose and went its several ways.

If you have already purchased your 1954 diary, please note that the A.A.L. Week-end Conference is to be held at Nottingham on April 10th and 11th.

W.T.

THE LIBRARY ASSOCIATION LIBRARY

AS A RESULT of the petition mentioned above, we are glad to report that the L.A. Council has decided that the library at Chaucer House shall remain open until 9 p.m. on Tuesday and Wednesday evenings for the trial period, October 20th—December 16th. Members who have expressed interest in this possibility will have been informed already of the L.A. Council's decision. Future action will depend on the use made of the library during this trial period, and with examinations ahead we feel sure that large numbers of students will justify the action of the A.A.L. and L.A. Councils by making good use of the facilities now at last provided.

THE NATIONAL BOOK LEAGUE LIBRARY

WE ARE INFORMED that the lending library of the National Book League, which is particularly rich in books on historical bibliography, will also remain open to its members until 8 p.m. on Wednesday and Thursday evenings for a trial period. On other week-days it will close at 5.30 p.m., and on Saturdays at 4 p.m. Books can also be borrowed by post. The library has recently been reclassified by Bliss, and a new catalogue will be issued shortly.

PRACTICAL CLASSIFICATION AND CATALOGUING

Further discussion of some of the "Comments" in our last issue.

Mr. W. Howard Phillips writes:

"To avoid ambiguity, real or imaginary—make utter nonsense of book classification!" That seems to be the advice of Mr. W. C. Pugsley in his "Comments" on Group A (iii) of the June, 1953 Registration Examination. While calling for "intelligent abbreviation" in the catalogue entry for such an item as "*The Municipal Year Book*," he goes on to advocate the fantastic classification mark, 352.04200058.

Mr. Pugsley, both as a practical classifier and as a tutor in this subject, will surely agree that book classification is above all a method of arranging books,

or entries representing books, in an order convenient to both librarian and reader. What ambiguity is avoided by the addition of 00058?—what advantages, theoretical or practical, or what additional convenience result from the use of this cumbersome notation for the volume in question? The same argument could be advanced against his use of 796.520941 and 328.42002 for the topics *Scottish Mountaineering* and *Extracts from Hansard* respectively.

In opposition to Mr. Pugsley, I would strongly advise all candidates to treat each title in the examination room on its own merits, forgetting the mass of other titles which may or may not exist on the same or similar subjects. To this end the main schedules of the Decimal Classification should be used with intelligence as a practical tool with the special form, geographical and other mnemonic features brought in *only when specific instructions appear to that effect in the main tables*.

These special tables were devised to enable large collections of books or of catalogue entries at certain specific headings to be divided into more detailed and conveniently usable groups, and candidates should assume that the examiners expect them to be sufficiently well-versed in the mechanics of the Decimal Classification to be aware of this.

Mr. Graham Jones, Lecturer, Birmingham School of Librarianship, writes:

I want to take issue with your commentator upon the Group A practical paper set in June of this year. I will confine myself to certain aspects of four questions only.

Q.1. As long ago as 1951, A. F. Johnson, in his *Practical Cataloguing*, and Mr. A. J. Wells, in a letter to the *Library Association Record* for June, both pointed out that an index entry such as "Shipping, identification signs 656," in addition to the general index entry "Shipping, 656," is as redundant as entries reading "Mathematics: Arithmetic 511" or "Arithmetic: Farey series 511.9." As Mr. Clifford Harris rightly says, subject index entries refer not to books, but to the subjects found in the classification system. Any classification leads from the general to the particular: why then should the index wastefully repeat this direction?

Q.2. In the author heading "Bristol, University, Institute of Education," neither the punctuation, capitalisation, nor the absence of italics correspond with the examples given in the Anglo-American Code. If it is replied, in the words of the L.A. Examiners, in the *Record* for March, 1951, "The Rules relating to capitalisation require a consistency which can be nauseating," I turn to the author index entries which seem to be suggested for this work—Bristol University Institute of Education; Education, Institute of, Bristol University; Institute of Education, Bristol University—and ask the reader to conceive the catalogue of a research library in which the publications of all seventeen institutes of education in this country were given this plethora of entries. Is this really "practical cataloguing"? (It is interesting to compare the suggested index entries for these three questions with the B.N.B.'s economical treatment, since B.N.B. is commonly supposed to be too detailed for public library use).

This may be one method of compiling an author index. Yet the reader should be reminded that the more economical practice is to treat the "author index" as an author catalogue, and therefore to *refer from* variant forms of the same name, instead of making *entries under* these.

Q.4. If we adopt the unconvincing supposition that "Councils, Town" and "Councils, County" are synonymous with local government, why are references not made from the direct form of heading ("County councils") and from "Borough councils" and the other possible varieties?

Q.5. A subject heading "Great Britain, Parliament, debates" carries the promise that this work will be found to *deal with* Parliamentary debates. Is

this really so? Does it in fact deal with Parliament at all? And if anyone were to require the book with the idea "Parliament" in mind, would not the main author entry and necessary references carry him to his goal? The reference from "Parliamentary debates" to "Great Britain" merely duplicates the work of the author reference "Parliament see Great Britain. Parliament," while the usefulness of a reference from "Official reports of the proceedings" is unproven and improbable.

I do not want to be understood as dogmatically stigmatising all these points I mention as incorrect. I do, however, suggest that most are unsystematic and uneconomical, and that while it is possible to argue in their favour, to offer them without comment is unfortunate. Unhappily, most writers on cataloguing offer solutions of their own without any reminder that other ways are admissible, and may be superior.

It is pleasant, finally, without having checked the classification numbers in detail, wholeheartedly to applaud the desire for complete specificity which their length indicates.

Mr. W. C. Pugsley replies:

Mr. Phillips delights in "having a go" at someone or something. Having had the privilege of working with me for a very long period (!) he should know my views on what is expedient and essential in the average public library. We are not, however, dealing with any particular type of library when sitting for a Library Association examination. What is correct for Sheffield or Dagenham may not be adequate for a special or society library, with their more limited field. The B.N.B. gives a lead in giving the full notation so that libraries can use it in part or in its entirety.

Mr. Phillips says "candidates should assume that the examiners expect them to be sufficiently well versed in the mechanics of Decimal Classification." This is sheer poppycock. The examiners expect candidates to have a full knowledge of the subject, but do not assume that it is present until proof is forthcoming, and this by the written answer. From experience I know students find much difficulty in "number building," and I for one, would not credit an examinee with knowledge unless proof were given. I maintain that for examination purposes, it is advisable to classify each book as fully as the scheme in use permits—otherwise why is it necessary to stipulate whether the 13th or 14th edition of Dewey's scheme is being used? Again a study of past question papers (Dec., 1952—first paper, question 7; June, 1952—first paper, question 7; or question 6 of the first paper of June, 1949) leads me to believe that my advice is correct.

I admit that such notations as that for the Municipal Year Book are cumbersome, but the fault lies with the scheme, not with the user. The book in question has three distinct phases—(a) subject, (b) geographical limitation, and (c) form. There is no other way of incorporating this. Bliss may give the same with a much smaller mark RTea5. To treat each title "on its merits" every subject, limitation and treatment must be considered and the selected scheme exploited to the full. Otherwise the question is not fully answered. Mr. Jones is evidently of this opinion. He does not, however, agree with some of the advice I have given for Cataloguing students.

My reply to his remarks is as follows:—

Q.1. We are asked to catalogue one book, not a library, and unless the subject heading for this book is *specific*, people looking at the index under "Shipping 656" may justifiably be annoyed to find that the only book is one on Identification Signs. The simile of "Mathematics, Arithmetic, 511" is unfortunate as it is not in any way comparable. Surely a subject index should guide one to subject content of stock, *not* to a classification scheme, which is

usually equipped with one.

Q.2. I admit that a printing error has given a coma instead of a point after the word Bristol. Regarding the various author index entries, I must insist that an index is an *index* and not a catalogue; the examples given endeavour to give complete coverage to the variations on the heading chosen. In actual practice one may find these to be superfluous, but when cataloguing for an examiner one must show that all angles are covered. I venture to suggest that thirty years of experience in the use of catalogues in public libraries has given me a fairly shrewd idea of what the public seek, and I find it best to leave nothing undone towards helping anyone in tracing a particular piece of information or book.

Q.4. There are many types of Council covered by the name Local Government. All I endeavoured to do was to bring the general terms of Town and County to the forefront rather than introduce the words Urban, Rural, Parish, etc. The direct form should have been included in addition.

Q.5. I must insist that the actual example is being catalogued and that when the official title is not one which will attract attention of would-be readers, sufficient references must be made to give complete coverage. Here again, we must catalogue "by the book" rather than adopt some quick method which may or may not be advisable in practice. The question of where to place this book has some bearing on the cataloguing of it. There is a strong case for placing it in English Miscellany, but having chosen the Sociological placing, one must be consistent in cataloguing the book and treat it from this point of view.

The whole of the remarks of Mr. Phillips, Mr. Jones and myself show that there is still considerable divergence of opinion as to what the examiner requires, and whilst I admit it is good to air these points of view, I think the Library Association Education Department should seriously consider making known their actual requirements in a syllabus rather than adhere to their rather vague outline.

ORGANISATION AND ADMINISTRATION

Mr. G. A. Featherston (Croydon P.L.) writes :—

In Question 7 of last June's Group C (vi) paper, a borrower is supposed to have fallen on a polished floor and sustained minor injuries. The person in charge has to report to the Chief Librarian. The question was evidently designed to reveal the candidate's competence in the writing of factual reports—surely a frequent duty of practising librarians.

Mr. Fred Taylor, in his tutorial comment, feels that the question is "quite out of place" in assessing "the knowledge necessary to competent practising librarians." He continues :—

"Question 7 is peculiar to say the least, for such an incident (or accident) as here described did actually happen in a library in the north of England, and students attending a

class for Registration Group C (vi) were told of it!"

Now, Sir, what does this extraordinary sentence actually MEAN?

Does it mean that Mr. Taylor supposes there is only ONE slippery polished floor in all the libraries of England?

Or that those libraries have seen only ONE such accident since the December examinations?

Or that the occasion he cites was the ONLY one on which such an accident was made the subject of a report?

Or is Mr. Taylor in fact suggesting collusion between the examiners and the tutor "in the north of England"?

Mr. Fred Taylor replies :—

There are far more important things upon which a branch librarian could be called upon to submit a report to

the chief librarian. Writing a factual report on the polished floor incident *does not involve training in librarianship*. Indeed, my youngest junior assistant is quite capable of giving me a "factual report" on any similar library incident.

Had the question required a branch

librarian to submit a report on, for example, Improvement in library services, Reorganisation within the various departments, Extension work, or Publicity and display methods, then it would be admissible in a Registration Examination.

STUDENTS' PROBLEMS

By O. S. TOMLINSON.

IT WOULD SEEM that students have only one problem—or so I am told by one disheartened contestant—"How to pass?", and a few hints on how to tackle examination papers will perhaps be the most useful contribution we can make to the cause of all those who will be having yet another go in December. It has all been said before—by tutors continually, by the wise ones who have left it all behind, and by the examiners.

Yes, examiners have their problems, too! It seems that they are just longing to pass you—if only you'd give them half a chance. And why won't you? The common faults are well-known and cures often suggested. Nowhere have they been pin-pointed better than in the *A.A.L. Guides to professional examinations*, and all students are doing themselves a grave disservice by failing to read the preliminary chapters of both volumes. (The other chapters should also be studied where appropriate—in fact no student should be without his own personal copy for continual use).

The common pitfalls for students can be roughly sorted into four groups.

The first is preparation. It is folly to rush into the fray unarmed, with little practical experience and a hazy memory of *Corbett, Phillips, Sharp* and the rest hastily digested between television shows a few nights back. Do you really consider that any professional body worthy of the name could give its seal of competence in such cases—and still expect a high status, and commensurate financial recompense, for its members? "Having a go" is more appropriate to the fun-fair than the examination room.

And how to prepare—

1. Work in a good library and make sure your experience is good. Know what goes on in other departments than your own. If you work in a branch, go to Central now and then and find out how it ticks, (or creaks): if you are exalted in "Admin." take a trip into the mission fields occasionally.

2. Visit as many other libraries as you can. You'll usually be welcome—librarians love showing off their little kingdoms and demonstrating their gadgets.

3. Attend professional meetings regularly—very often topics of current importance are discussed which may be "good for a question." Keep up to date with professional periodicals, particularly *Library Science Abstracts*.

4. Notice that the percentage of passes of students who have pursued a properly organized course of study (full or part-time or correspondence) are higher than the examination averages. There's a moral here. With organized study you are sure of expert guidance and advice, you will cover the syllabus accurately and evenly and you will get help

with those parts which you don't like and about which, if you study on your own, you will easily persuade yourself, "Oh, well, there won't be a question on it . . ."—and you'll be wrong.

After abysmal ignorance, the most common fault is the inability of candidates to answer the question that has been set—all tutors know this complaint, and conversations with examiners will always endorse it. This is often a by-product of ignorance, but more usually is an attempt by the candidate to make the question fit the "stock answer" he has learnt, or to introduce totally irrelevant matter to give bulk to the answer. The last paper for Registration C (vi) asked for "an outline of the recommendations of the Vollans *Report on library co-operation in Great Britain* with regard to the routine of inter-library loans." Now most students would have expected something on the Vollans Report and would have studied it carefully, but anyone who ignored the limitations of this question and trotted out all the recommendations of the report, or who gave the examiners a resumé of library co-operation could not have expected to pass on that question. A careful reading of the question and an analysis of its key-points, its implications and its limitations, will always amply repay the few moments spent. The *A.A.L. Guide* has some excellent advice, with examples, on the technique of reading questions, noting salient points and drafting them into a coherent answer. Candidates must carefully read and obey the instructions on the cover of the script book and at the head of the question papers, and when an examiner says "list," "tabulate," "enumerate," etc., he should be taken at his word and not be presented with a rambling essay.

Style and presentation count, too, whilst spelling, punctuation, and general tidiness, all help to ensure a successful conclusion. The candidate who knows the subject to Honours standard is not likely to fail for the odd lapse of spelling, though he may not achieve "Honours"; nor is the examiner likely to worry too much about his atrocious writing, if it can be deciphered, but the border-line cases and the scrapers-through can't afford to lose marks for such things. And leave ball-point pens at home on examination day—at worst they produce illegible writing, at best they smudge badly with dire results to a paper that has to pass through many hands after it leaves the candidate. Try to cultivate a facility with written answers. This is best done by practice, and is yet another advantage of the formal course, where plenty of written work is, or should be, given. Candidates should not rush straight into print with a mass of undigested and disorderly facts. Scrap paper should be used for a pencilled note of the things to be brought out in the answer and these drafted out into logical and systematic order. An essay-type answer should develop from a beginning (perhaps a general statement of the points under discussion); a middle (the points enumerated and expanded); and should round off with a conclusion, a summary or a counter proposal. Too many essays have no form and do not end so much as "cease to go on." Slang and colloquialism have no place and facetiousness, cynicism or near-libels won't add to the usefulness of an answer. Essays in a juvenile, chatty style, like a conversation with a crony, look singularly sickening. The golden rule to remember is that the examiners are looking for signs of an adult outlook as well as factual knowledge, and have every right to reject those who display immaturity, carelessness, and an unorganized mind.

To the above hints should be added a calm and serene approach to the examination paper. No last evening cramming or last minute recriminations in the train: arrive in time to settle in before the papers are handed out: read the paper through twice before selecting the questions

to be tackled: apportion yourself a time-table and stick to it, leaving good time for a last-minute read-through to correct the follies that have crept in. The first few minutes' calm reading will help the "butterflies" to disperse and a thoroughly workmanlike job can be made of answering the question correctly, concisely and completely. Remember the timing—it's very important. Too long on your pet theme may mean you cannot answer the required number of questions, and a long rambling several-page answer will gain no more, and maybe less, marks than the workmanlike answer that represents a good half-hour's effort. Unless you gain exceptionally high marks on the others, you cannot afford to miss a question.

There is much left unsaid, and too much that has been sketched over,—so don't forget the *A.A.L. Guide!*

The keywords to these hints are, Preparation, Analysis, Style and Serenity—by chance a happily apt initial mnemonic!

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PRIORITY FOR THE READERS OF TOMORROW

By G. W. J. WHEATLEY, A.L.A., *Deputy Librarian, Dartford P.L.*

"BECAUSE it is apparent that school children in this country are reading less and less, the National Book League and the Association of Education Committees are organising an enquiry into the running of school libraries."

The quotation is from a recent issue of a national Sunday paper. As librarians we are naturally concerned with this problem, and professional interest is reflected in the paper read by Mr. Lawson at this year's Annual Conference. National papers are prone to exaggerate, but we cannot accept even the statement that children are reading less without considering how far we have met our bounden responsibilities. Certainly some library reports for the current year reveal a decline in children's reading. This is variously attributed to such other influences as television, radio and the cinema.

Let us examine the positive factors which can, and should, directly influence children's reading. Formal education commences at the age of five. By that time parents may reasonably be expected to have made some start by reading stories, and given some encouragement in learning the alphabet. Parents, then, are the first influence upon which we should

be able to count. We know it is not always the case, but a sympathetic home environment is the basis upon which all education is founded.

Secondly, the teacher and the school. It is at this stage that we expect the child to learn the mechanics of reading and to receive a positive stimulus to further reading. Not for the sake of reading alone, but in order to fulfil the wider aims of education. These may be defined as those which encourage youngsters to become good citizens, which enable them to earn a living for themselves, and which enable them to occupy their leisure time profitably. Are teachers sufficiently aware of their responsibilities in this field? Is it too much to expect from them that in the considerable period of time at their disposal, they can encourage, say, 30 children out of 40 to be confident readers?

The third positive factor is the public library which must ensure that the desire for reading does not grow stale. It has been hinted that there may be something wrong with the earlier stages (i.e. Home and School), but where have we fallen down? Can we afford to be complacent about our present provision for children? It will be argued that we have school library services and busy central children's libraries to-day. In how many schools with a service administered by library staff do the children have more than five minutes lopped off a lesson in which to make a selection from more than 200 books? How many central children's libraries are busy because they are coping with the overflow from inadequately stocked and staffed branch libraries?

In recent years concern has been expressed at the gap which exists between the school leaver and the reader in the adult libraries. So now we also have Intermediate Libraries which are intended to bridge the gap.

This is yet another example of our groping, experimental approach rather than a logical development:—

1. Early public libraries—Adults only.
2. Children's libraries added as stocks permitted. (Usually located in a basement).
3. Adult and junior libraries simultaneously built.
4. School libraries.
5. Intermediate libraries and Youth Club libraries.

The factors which decided development in this way are fairly obvious, but the conditions of 1850 do not now apply and we may reasonably be expected to profit from our historical background.

Of course traditional buildings are designed specifically to be managed by a minimum of staff, and children are again given second place in stock, staff and space. May it therefore be suggested that in future, although we may be understaffed, we give priority to work with children when building branch libraries and allocate the corner bays to adults who are more capable of looking after themselves? The staff of such "children's branches" should be chosen for their interest in work with children; seniors should preferably be permanent and thus able to anticipate juvenile reading requirements. The stock should be chosen by the chief librarian and senior staff in consultation with a local committee of teachers, maintained in first-class condition and attractively displayed.

Only by thus improving on our present inadequate provision can we hope to tackle the whole problem of "children reading less." Even if we design branches specifically for children we obviously cannot force them to read, but we can look to teachers to encourage them. Is it too much to expect teachers to be able to assess a child's reading interests and to suggest that books on the subject may be found in the library? That is all we require—a mere suggestion and encouragement from a respected teacher to a literate child.

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NOTICE OF ELECTION.

Nominations are invited for the following Officers and Councillors of the Association for the year 1954:—

Honorary Secretary, Honorary Treasurer, and Honorary Editor; and six nationally elected Councillors.

Nominations must be made in writing by two or more members of the Association, countersigned by the nominee, and reach me not later than 15th November, 1953.

W. TYNEMOUTH,

Honorary Secretary.

CENTRAL LIBRARY,
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A.L.A. CONFERENCE, JUNE 21-27, 1953

Some impressions, contributed by four English interne librarians.

From Miss Janet Ruff, St. Louis P.L.

It is hard for English people to comprehend the vast distances in the United States, which make a national convention such a big undertaking. This year, some 3,200 librarians travelled west to Los Angeles for a very full programme. The usual pleasures of meeting people are enhanced by the fact that they may live in quite different environments from one's own—yet all have similar problems and interests. The conference demonstrated to us the awareness among American librarians of their responsibilities in the field of adult education, and we learned of many ways in which this problem is being approached.

An outstanding feature of the conference was the reading of a letter from President Eisenhower to Dr. Downes, president of the A.L.A., in which he said:—

"Our librarians serve the precious liberties of our nation: freedom of inquiry, freedom of the spoken and the written word, freedom of exchange of ideas.

Upon these clear principles, democracy depends for its very life, for they are the great sources of knowledge and enlightenment. And knowledge—full, unfettered knowledge of its own heritage, of freedom's enemies, of the whole world of men and ideas—this knowledge is a free people's surest strength.

The converse is just as surely true. A democracy smugly disdainful of new ideas would be a sick democracy. A democracy chronically fearful of new ideas would be a dying democracy.

For all these reasons, we must in these times be intelligently alert not only to the fanatic cunning of Communist conspiracy—but also to the grave dangers in meeting fanaticism with ignorance. For, in order to fight totalitarians who exploit the ways of freedom to serve their own ends, there are some zealots who—with more wrath than wisdom—would adopt a strangely unintelligent course. They would try to defend freedom by denying freedom's friends the opportunity of studying Communism in its entirety—its plausibilities, its falsities, its weaknesses.

But we know that freedom cannot be served by the devices of the tyrant. As it is an ancient truth that freedom cannot be legislated into existence, so it is no less obvious that freedom cannot be censored into existence. And any who act as if freedom's defences are to be found in suppression and suspicion and fear confess a doctrine that is alien to America.

The libraries of America are and must ever remain the homes of free, inquiring minds. To them, our citizens—of all ages and races, of all creeds and political persuasions—must ever be able to turn with clear confidence that there they can freely seek the whole truth, unworped by fashion and uncompromised by expediency. For in such whole and healthy knowledge alone are to be found and understood those majestic truths of man's nature and destiny that prove, to each succeeding generation, the validity of freedom."

From Miss Margaret O'Brien, St. Louis P.L.

The conference provided ample opportunity for bookmobile librarians to get together and exchange views on methods of staffing, stocking, and publicity of bookmobiles. It was shown that in the U.S.

more emphasis is placed on juvenile work and service to schools through bookmobiles than on service to adults. Through surveys it has been estimated that 50—80 per cent. of total stock is juvenile and non-fiction forms about 10—15 per cent.

In the discussion on bookmobile publicity, methods advanced were similar to those used in England, the main difference being in the use of local radio stations to announce schedules, etc. In the St. Louis County Library, the possibility of bookmobile and H.Q. intercommunication by radio is under discussion.

Among many other points it was suggested that certain special services should be carried out in mobile as well as branch libraries, e.g. ready reference works should be available for consultation, well chosen pamphlets and magazines should supplement book stock.

In spite of the early start of all bookmobile "sessions" (8.30 a.m.), the meetings were well attended. The speakers gave a comprehensive picture of both city and county bookmobile service and the enthusiastic discussions among the audience were limited only by time.

From Miss Audrey Chester, *Lima P.L.*

Audio-visual materials are widely used in many American libraries, and this interest was reflected at the A.L.A. Conference. At one of the pre-conference workshops librarians and others studied the use of films, recordings, television, etc., in various types of libraries.

Many libraries broadcast regular programmes from local stations, and the establishing of an educational television service as a joint effort by the education authority, public library, service clubs and other interested organizations is the goal in many towns.

Large public libraries frequently own film collections, and the use of 16mm. sound films of an educational nature is made possible in smaller communities by film circuits. Collections of films are exchanged between the libraries in the circuit at regular intervals, each member-library pays a fixed subscription, and one library serves as H.Q. for purchasing, processing and distribution. New films suitable for library purchase were shown each lunch-time during conference week.

The American librarian's sense of responsibility to the community, as well as the necessity of winning support for the public library, has encouraged him to investigate those services which the public library can give, in addition to an adequate book service.

From Miss Barbara Roberts, *Detroit P.L.*

American librarians are very much aware of the advantages of travelling and working abroad. One of the meetings was an International Round Table, at which the principal speaker was E. Ben Evans, of Bakersfield, California, who had formerly been with U.S.I.S. in Oslo. He spoke of the habits of Americans abroad and the need for mutual understanding. He felt that Americans should not try to form other countries in their own image. One of the points he stressed was that there should be no propaganda.

In a meeting of Young People's Librarians it was seen that most libraries here have a special section and staff to cater for youth.

Two projects to awaken an awareness of the American heritage were set up in widely separated cities, Albuquerque, New Mexico and Indianapolis, Indiana. These experiments met with tremendous response and enthusiasm, and it is hoped that other libraries will take part, as it is felt that a better understanding of international affairs will result from a study of America's past.

LETTERS FROM MEMBERS

SHORT LIST - A POSTSCRIPT

I AM grateful to Mr. E. T. A. Bryant for drawing my attention to the late Mr. Hynes' paper on short lists in the *Library Assistant* for 1938. My failure to recall an excellent article I must have read at the time is quite inexcusable, and adds point to Mr. Bryant's sound advice to read *Library Science Abstracts*—I may plead this did not appear in 1938!

Two important matters were omitted both from Mr. Hynes' and my treatment. If in dealing with the higher posts I ignored the feminine approach, despite the preponderance of women in our profession, it was because I found they stood little chance for municipal library posts on Grade VI and upwards. In fifteen short lists on which I appeared between 1946 and 1952—this is **not** a record!—I only once met a woman, and she was unsuccessful.

Mr. Corbett (*Introduction to Public Librarianship*, p. 11) is noncommittal in discussing the possibility of a newly qualified assistant ultimately obtaining a small chiefship or a subordinate post in a larger system. The table herewith seems conclusive enough.

P. Hepworth,

City Librarian, Norwich.

ABSTRACTS

MR. BRYANT'S suggestion in the September-October issue that articles for professional periodicals should be read by colleagues before submission to editors is a timely one. Indeed, I fear that it will always be timely. To this suggestion I should like to add another—that writers submit with their contributions their own abstracts which could form the basis of the abstract eventually appearing in *Library Science Abstracts*. In this way it would become clear to writers that the analysis of content required for an abstract reveals flaws in the argument and the proper sequence of statement, and sometimes raises doubts as to the validity of conclusions. A self-prepared abstract is, in fact, an admirable means of self-criticism.

It is impossible here to reproduce the excellent notes for the guidance of abstractors issued by the Editor of *Library Science Abstracts*, but a maximum length of 150 words and absence of criticism of material are essential. Intending self-abstractors can learn much from intensive reading of those abstracts already published.

E.P.D.

| Present Chief was formerly: | A Chief elsewhere. | A Deputy elsewhere. | The Deputy there. |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| Belfast | — | Yes | — |
| Birmingham | — | — | Yes |
| Bradford | — | Yes | — |
| Bristol | — | — | Yes |
| Coventry | — | Yes | — |
| Edinburgh | — | — | Yes |
| Glasgow | — | — | Yes |
| Hull | — | — | Yes |
| Leeds | — | — | Yes |
| Leicester | — | Yes | — |
| Liverpool | — | — | Yes |
| Manchester | Yes | — | — |
| Newcastle-on-Tyne | Yes | — | — |
| Nottingham | — | — | Yes |
| Sheffield | — | — | Yes |
| Wandsworth | — | Yes | — |
| Westminster | Yes | — | — |

STAFF AND PUBLIC

TWO ARTICLES in your September issue seemed to answer one another. Under Miss Apted's training scheme Angela Brown is first told of the high principles of librarianship defended by Mr. Woods—service, accuracy, etc. After this, however, she is completely crushed. She is "introduced to the pasting and printing of basic routines . . . Readers' enquiries and applications to join the library are referred to an enquiries desk, or a senior. . . . When Angela has been on the staff for some time she is given charge of a special job, such as ordering stationery for the department."

Why should the Angela Browns of the library world care about the public? Their job is to paste in date labels and pass examinations. When they are qualified, they introduce a new generation of Angelas to "the basic routines, each being methodically explained and demonstrated." This state of affairs is prevalent in too many of our libraries. Cannot the young assistant be allowed some chance for the contact with the public that a librarian ought to have? Putting your assistants into contact with the fundamental purpose of public librarianship, the personal supply of books to readers, would sort out many more unsuitable entrants than the L.A. examinations.

D. S. Hope,

Assistant, Croydon P.L.

[Miss Apted's article was concerned with the improvement of training within the library service as it is at present organised. Until we have some satisfactory division of staff duties there will continue to be conflict between our ideals and our experience. Departmental and branch librarians must still make the best of the situation as it is while taking every opportunity to improve it.—Hon. Ed.]

Some points from other letters received in reply to Mr. Woods' article:

I suggest that one of the supreme causes of indifference of assistants to

the public is the indifference of librarians to assistants. One can hardly expect an eighteen-year-old (or less) to have a sense of vocation, or even the polished approach with which to satisfy every one of the various types who make up the borrowing public. It is up to his superior to tell him what to do and how to do it.

D. E. Harrison,

*Sub-librarian, Manor Park Branch,
Leeds.*

To allow no restraint in the placing of fiction requests and to make every effort to satisfy them would surely be to the detriment of a good library service, particularly in smaller libraries where there is constant juggling of money to maintain a reasonable balance between cheap fiction and popular non-fiction on the one hand and good, up-to-date, representative subject coverage on the other.

K. S. Pickles,

*Senior Assistant, Harwich Branch,
Essex Co. L.*

Rules concerned with fines, reservations, conduct in the library, etc., are not usually made to annoy readers, but are intended to safeguard both the assistant and the reader who uses the facilities of the library with discretion.

Heather K. Pett,

Assistant, Norwich P.L.

HEWITT'S SUMMARY

ATTENTION should perhaps be drawn, for the benefit of students, to a few slips which appear in the most recent edition of A. R. Hewitt's *Summary of Public Library Law*.

Throughout the section dealing with Northern Ireland legislation, references to the Ministry of Home Affairs should be construed as references to the Ministry of Health and Local Government since the functions of the former for the administration of public services in connection with public health and local government were transferred to the latter under the provision of The Ministries (Transfer of Function) (No. 1) Order 1944 (S.R. & O. 43 of 1944).

At page 49, the constitution of county library committees should note the representation from boroughs. This has become necessary because of the creation of new boroughs since 1924. The easiest amendment in this case would be the deletion of the words "urban districts" and this would leave the word "towns" to cover all towns regardless of their government.

At page 52, in the first paragraph under "Provision of Libraries, etc.," the references to sec. 11 of the 1855 Act should read "s.12."

At page 50, under "Staff," the following qualification is required to be added to the last sentence: "... be

appointed as librarians in counties or county boroughs (S.R. & O. 1939, No. 44)."

At page 37, the frequency of Scottish burgh library committee meetings is noted as being provided for by s.19 of the 1887 Act; this should be s.20.

W. J. Murison,
County Librarian, Antrim.

We wish to apologise to Messrs. Ranganathan, W. Hynes (late librarian of Eastbourne) and Ben Jonson for miss-spelling their names in our last issue.

ROUND THE DIVISIONS—2

DEVON AND CORNWALL

ON A Wednesday afternoon in 1937, twenty people of varying ages met together at Plymouth Central Library. They were comparative strangers, but all had one ideal—the furthering of the profession of librarianship in their midst. Out of their enthusiasm and determination rose the Devon and Cornwall Division. At this inaugural meeting they were honoured with the presence of Mr. Ellis Sellick, then President of the A.A.L.. This meeting drafted the rules and established the series of meetings that are continued to-day, and which have proved of such great value to all who have attended them. The Division is proud still to number amongst its active members many of that original band of Librarians.

The story of the Devon and Cornwall Division is one of constant struggle against distance. From one end of the Division to the other by road is nearly 170 miles. Main traffic links by road and rail tend to keep close to the Southern Coast of the Division, thus making journeys away from these links trying and unreliable. The main centre of population in Devon is the comparatively small area bounded by Exeter in the east and Plymouth 45 miles west, and hemmed in on the north side by the

wilds of desolate—yet beautiful—Dartmoor. Between these two points there are no fewer than four Municipal and ten County Library Branches. From Plymouth, 70 miles has to be travelled westwards before the main library centre of Cornwall is reached, at Truro. From Truro, within a radius of 20 miles are to be found four Municipal Libraries and the County Library Headquarters (at Truro), with its many service points in the nearby small towns. Apart from this large grouping of population, the remainder of Cornwall is made up of isolated communities each some distance from its nearest neighbouring township. The most thickly populated areas of North Devon are those centred around Barnstaple and Bideford, and in this area are to be found a Municipal, County Regional and the Athenaeum Library.

Two further obstacles have to be overcome by enthusiastic members, the most serious being the fact that few of the participating libraries close for the same weekly half-day, which debars many assistants from the meetings. The other concerns finance. Travelling charges together with the cost of meals, discourage many of the younger assistants from regular attendance, and against this we have no

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remedy. It is unfortunate, as it is in their early years that junior assistants can receive the most value from their inter-library visits and meetings. For the same reasons it has not been possible to arrange joint meetings with the Bristol and District Division, though the Division has co-operated on a number of occasions with the S.W. branch of the L.A. at successful week-end conferences.

Meetings are normally held quarterly and tend to be held in the larger centres of population in the southern half of Devon, in rotation, this having been found to be the most convenient. If possible, a full afternoon and evening's programme is arranged as members would otherwise have very little chance of meeting one another. It also enables some members to attend a part only of the proceedings. Annual General Meetings always occupy the full afternoon and most of the evening. The policy is to make the business meeting in the afternoon as attractive as possible to try and induce younger members to join in discussions and speak their minds, leaving the evening free for the main speaker and discussion. Well known speakers and writers have been invited to address these meetings and most interesting talks have been given by V. C. Clinton Baddeley, Edmund Crispin, Lennox Kerr (Peter Dawlish), E. R. Delderfield, to mention but a few. Visits have been made to the Cathedral Library at Exeter, Dartington Hall Community Centre, various paper mills including the Tuckenhay mills near Totnes (the "home" of hand-made paper), printing works and other interesting undertakings. Members who have been prevented from attending these activities can usually read about such visits in the Divisional Magazine *Outpost*, now firmly established. Winter activities have taken the form of Brains Trusts, Quizzes, Play Readings, etc.

The membership of the Division now stands at 134, with an average attendance at meetings of over 50.

Active members of the division include several founder members. Mr. Snook, Devon Deputy County Librarian, and Mr. Bennetts, holding a similar post in Cornwall, are both committee members; Mr. Best Harris has risen to the post of City Librarian of Plymouth, and still manages to provide the division with provocative papers; Miss Langford and Mrs. Ridler, the former of Exeter City and the latter of Newton Abbot, are both on the committee, where their past experience is of great value; Mr. Paley of Exeter City, Mr. Yeates of Plymouth, and Mr. Pike of Torquay, are all Past Chairmen of the Division and still take active parts in the organisation. The appointment of Mr. Brockett of the Roborough Library of the University College of the S.W. as a committee member was in line with the policy to keep in touch with all points of view, and that policy has fully justified itself. Mr. Richards, of the Paignton Branch of Devon County, now the Vice-Chairman, gave many years' hard service as secretary-treasurer, as did Mrs. McDowell, Devon H.Q., as committee member and Chairman, and both remain to give help in the organisation of the Division. The present Chairman is Mr. Charlesworth of Plymouth—a newcomer to the S.W., and the secretary is Mr. Hardy, of Devon H.Q.

There is a keen and lively interest in library matters in the S.W., particularly on the part of the younger members and this is often put to the test when coaches have to be paid for and meals arranged. It follows, too, that with a limited itinerary available, divisional meetings can only be held in a comparatively select group of libraries and a big advantage has been that so often the authorities concerned have been "hosts" in providing freely the necessary facilities. The Divisional Committee is extremely grateful to these authorities and their officers—usually members of our own association—who co-operate so willingly.

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